Iris Braun
PRESENCE
Essays on Silence,
Trust and Being
e-book

PRESENCE

Essays on Silence, Trust, and Being

Iris Braun

© Iris Braun 2026

Thank you for being part of this journey.
For more information, books, and messages, please visit:

https://sites.google.com/view/irisbraun/start

Contact:

Iris Braun
Rosengasse 4
92355 Velburg
Germany
contact.iris.braun@icloud.com

To those who are learning to stay.
To those who are learning to let go.
And to those who are still finding their way back to themselves.

Introduction 6
Presence 8
Holding Space 10
Listening 13
Vulnerability 15
Silence 18
Trust 21
Letting Go 24
Surrender 27
Afterword 30
About the Author 32
Back Cover Text 34

Introduction

This book began as a website series.

What started as individual essays slowly formed a continuous thread. Each text stood on its own, yet all of them were pointing toward the same space. Over time, it became clear that they were not separate reflections, but different expressions of one underlying theme.

Presence.

The essays were written independently, without the intention of creating a book. They were responses to inner observations, to experiences of listening, holding space, silence, trust, letting go, and surrender. Only later did they reveal themselves as parts of a larger whole.

This collection brings them together in one place.

Not to define presence, and not to explain it, but to stay close to it through language. Each essay

remains as it was written, but together they form a quiet sequence of perspectives on the same movement inward.

This is not a guide.
It is not a system.
It is simply a gathering of moments that point toward something that cannot be fully expressed, only noticed.

And even this noticing is already part of it.

Presence

Presence is often misunderstood. It is not something loud or impressive. It is not about having the right words, the right answers, or the right solution. Presence is something quieter – and in that quietness, something deeply powerful happens.

There is a simple, almost overlooked truth: the power of just being there can be greater than anything you could say or do. When someone is in pain, confusion, or transition, it is not explanation that reaches them first. It is presence. A steady, grounded being-with that does not try to change the moment, but allows it to exist as it is.

We are often trained to fix. To solve. To improve. To respond quickly to discomfort – ours or others'. But presence asks something different. It invites us to stay instead of fixing. To remain when nothing is clear. To not rush into solutions just to escape

uncertainty. This staying is not passive; it is deeply active. It is the choice to be fully with what is, without stepping away from it.

In this way, presence becomes more than a relational skill. It becomes a way of seeing. Because when we stop trying to immediately correct life, we begin to actually encounter it. People are no longer problems to solve, but worlds to witness.

And then there is silence.

Not the empty silence of absence, but a living silence – one that holds connection in a different form. In silence, something else speaks. Not in language, but in recognition. In shared breath. In the subtle awareness that nothing needs to be filled to be whole.

Silence becomes connection when presence is real. When we are no longer performing understanding, but simply being with what is. In that space,

something honest emerges – something that does not depend on explanation.

Presence, then, is not about doing less. It is about being more fully where you are. With others. With yourself. With life as it unfolds. And in that fullness, something quietly opens that no answer alone could ever replace.

Holding Space

Holding space is often misunderstood as something passive, as if it simply meant being there quietly while another person moves through something. In reality, it is one of the most intentional forms of presence. It asks for awareness, restraint, and a kind of inner steadiness that does not come naturally in a world that constantly pushes toward action and resolution.

To hold space for someone means to be with them without trying to change their experience. It

means not rushing them out of their emotions and not shaping what they feel into something easier to handle. It is the willingness to remain present when things are unclear, messy, or unresolved. This kind of presence does not withdraw, but it also does not interfere.

There is a subtle impulse in human connection to fix what feels uncomfortable. We want to help, to guide, to offer answers that might ease the situation. Often, this comes from genuine care, but it can also come from our own discomfort with witnessing pain. Sitting with someone in their struggle without trying to move them out of it requires a different kind of strength.

Holding space asks us to stay instead of fixing. It asks us to listen without preparing a response and to allow silence without feeling the need to fill it. In many moments, what a person truly needs is not a solution but the experience of being seen and felt.

They need the freedom to exist fully in what they are going through without being redirected.

In this way, holding space becomes an act of trust. Trust that the other person does not need to be managed. Trust that their process carries its own intelligence. Trust that not everything has to be resolved immediately in order to have meaning.

Silence begins to change its quality in this kind of presence. It is no longer empty or distant but becomes a form of connection. When space is truly held, silence allows something deeper to emerge, something that does not rely on words to be understood. It creates a shared awareness in which nothing has to be performed or explained.

Holding space is not about stepping back. It is about staying fully without taking over. It is a quiet commitment to remain present with another person exactly where they are.

And in that presence, something shifts. A person begins to feel free, not because they were changed, but because they were allowed to be.

Listening

Listening is often mistaken for something simple, as if it only required hearing words and responding appropriately. In reality, real listening begins where the need to respond falls away. It is less about what is said in return and more about the quality of attention that is given.

Most of the time, we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply. While the other person is speaking, part of us is already preparing an answer, forming an opinion, or relating what we hear back to our own experience. In doing so, we unintentionally move away from what is actually being shared.

True listening asks for something deeper. It asks for an inner stillness, a quieting of the impulse to interrupt, correct, or direct. Attention becomes less about doing and more about allowing. It becomes a space in which another person can unfold without being shaped or guided.

To listen in this way means to hear not only the words, but also what lives beneath them. The pauses, the tone, the moments of hesitation. The things that are not yet fully formed, but are trying to find expression. This kind of listening requires patience, because not everything reveals itself immediately. Some things need time and safety before they can come into the open.

Listening is not about leading a conversation toward clarity. It is about trusting that clarity will emerge on its own. It is about staying present long enough for something real to surface, without forcing it into form.

There is also a quiet form of trust within listening. Trust that the other person does not need to be managed. Trust that silence is not a problem to be solved. Trust that understanding grows naturally when space is not constantly filled.

When someone feels truly listened to, something begins to shift. They open, not because they were asked the perfect question, but because they were not interrupted in their experience. They begin to hear themselves more clearly, simply because they were given the space to speak without resistance.

And often, that is enough.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is often associated with weakness, as if opening oneself meant losing control or becoming exposed in a way that invites harm. But in truth, vulnerability is not a loss of strength. It is

a different kind of strength, one that does not rely on protection.

To be vulnerable means to allow oneself to be seen without hiding behind certainty, roles, or carefully constructed responses. It is the willingness to remain open even when there is no guarantee of how that openness will be received.

Most people learn early on to protect themselves. To filter what they say, to adjust how they appear, to hold back what feels too raw or too uncertain. These protections serve a purpose. They create safety, especially in environments where openness is not met with care.

But over time, these same protections can begin to create distance. Not only from others, but also from oneself.

Vulnerability invites a return.

Not to a state without boundaries, but to a place where honesty becomes more important than

control. Where expression is not shaped to avoid discomfort, but allowed to emerge as it is.

This does not mean sharing everything with everyone. It is not about exposure without awareness. It is about authenticity in the moments where it matters. The quiet choice to be real instead of being guarded.

There is always a risk in vulnerability. It cannot be fully controlled or predicted. But there is also something that only becomes possible through it.

Real connection.

Not the kind that is built on agreement or surface understanding, but the kind that forms when something true is shared and received. When another person is not just met at the level of thought, but at the level of experience.

Vulnerability creates a space where nothing needs to be performed. Where imperfection is not

something to hide, but something that allows depth to exist.

It is not always comfortable. In fact, it rarely is. But it is real.

And in that reality, something shifts.

Not because everything becomes easier, but because what is present is no longer hidden.

Vulnerability is not about losing yourself.
It is about no longer needing to protect who you are in every moment.

And in that openness, something quietly strengthens.

Silence

Silence is often misunderstood as something empty, something that appears when nothing is happening. It is easily associated with absence,

with a lack of words, a lack of response, a lack of connection. And because of this, silence is often avoided or quickly filled.

But silence is not empty. It is full in a different way.

Most conversations are built on words, yet not everything meaningful can be spoken. There are moments when language reaches its limit, when what is felt cannot be translated without losing something essential. In those moments, silence begins to carry what words cannot.

Silence, when it is not forced or uncomfortable, becomes a space of presence. It allows things to settle. It gives experience room to exist without immediately shaping it into meaning or explanation. It is not the absence of connection, but a different form of it.

To remain in silence with another person requires trust. It asks for the willingness to not fill the space out of habit or discomfort. It asks for the ability to

stay present even when there is nothing to say. This kind of silence is not distant. It is shared.

There is a subtle shift that happens when silence is allowed instead of avoided. Attention deepens. Awareness becomes more sensitive. Small things become noticeable, a breath, a change in posture, a feeling that moves quietly beneath the surface.

In silence, there is no performance. Nothing needs to be explained, justified, or improved. There is only what is present.

For many, silence can feel unfamiliar at first. Without words, there is nothing to hold onto. No structure, no immediate feedback. But over time, silence reveals itself not as a void, but as a foundation.

It creates space for clarity without forcing it. It allows connection without defining it. It supports presence without directing it.

Silence does not replace words, but it gives them depth. Without silence, words lose their weight. They become constant, but not necessarily meaningful.

When silence is welcomed, something becomes possible that cannot be created through effort. A quiet understanding that does not need to be spoken.

And in that understanding, connection takes on a different quality. Not louder, not more visible, but more real.

Trust

Trust is often spoken about as something we either have or do not have, as if it were a fixed state that appears once certainty is established. But real trust does not begin with certainty. It begins where certainty ends.

Most of what we try to trust in life is tied to outcomes. We trust when things feel predictable, when situations make sense, when we believe we can anticipate what will happen next. In this form, trust is closely linked to control.

But life rarely unfolds in ways that can be fully predicted or managed. There are moments when clarity is missing, when direction is unclear, when nothing feels settled. It is in these moments that a deeper form of trust becomes relevant.

This kind of trust is not based on knowing. It is based on allowing.

Allowing things to develop without forcing immediate answers. Allowing uncertainty to exist without rushing to resolve it. Allowing oneself to remain present even when there is no clear ground to stand on.

Trust, in this sense, is not passive. It is an active decision to stay open in the absence of guarantees.

There is a natural tendency to seek stability by tightening control. To plan more, think more, prepare more. And while these responses can create a sense of safety, they often distance us from what is actually unfolding.

Trust moves in the opposite direction. It softens the need to hold everything together. It creates space where life can unfold without constant interference.

This does not mean abandoning responsibility or becoming indifferent. It means recognizing that not everything can be managed, and that forcing clarity often leads further away from it.

Trust also extends beyond situations. It includes a trust in oneself. A quiet confidence that whatever arises can be met, even if it is not yet understood. Not because everything will go as expected, but because there is an ability to remain present within it.

Over time, trust becomes less about holding onto something external and more about a relationship with the unfolding of life itself.

It does not remove uncertainty. It changes the way uncertainty is experienced.

Instead of something that must be eliminated, it becomes something that can be moved through.

And in that shift, something settles.

Not because everything is clear, but because it no longer needs to be.

Letting Go

Letting go is often misunderstood as giving up, as if releasing something meant losing it or failing to hold on long enough. It can feel like a form of resignation, a quiet admission that something did not work out as intended.

But true letting go is not about defeat. It is about alignment.

Much of what we hold onto is not held out of clarity, but out of habit, fear, or the desire to keep things the way they were. We hold onto expectations, outcomes, identities, and relationships, not always because they are still alive, but because they once were.

Letting go begins with recognition. The moment we see that something is no longer in movement, no longer growing, no longer in harmony with where we are. This recognition is often subtle at first, easy to ignore, easy to postpone.

There is a natural resistance in this process. Holding on creates a sense of stability, even when that stability is no longer real. Letting go, on the other hand, introduces space. And space can feel uncertain.

But within that space, something begins to shift.

Letting go is not an act of force. It cannot be rushed or demanded. It unfolds when the need to control softens, when the grip loosens, not because we decide to drop everything at once, but because we begin to see that holding on is no longer necessary.

It is less about pushing something away and more about allowing it to move on.

In this way, letting go becomes a form of trust. Trust that what is meant to remain will remain without being forced. Trust that what leaves creates room for something that could not exist before.

There is also a quiet return to oneself in letting go. When we stop holding everything together, we begin to notice what is still present without effort. What remains when nothing is being controlled.

Letting go does not erase what has been. It does not deny the meaning something once had. It

simply allows it to take its place in the past, without trying to carry it into the present where it no longer belongs.

It is a gentle shift from holding to allowing, from managing to trusting.

And in that shift, something opens.

Not as a replacement, not as an immediate answer, but as a new kind of space.

A space where life can move again.

Surrender

Surrender is often misunderstood as weakness, as if it meant giving up or losing control in a way that leaves nothing left to stand on. It can feel like a last resort, something that happens only when all other options have failed.

But surrender, in its deeper sense, is not collapse. It is a shift in relationship.

Much of our effort in life is directed toward maintaining control. We try to shape outcomes, manage uncertainty, and hold things together in ways that feel secure. This effort is not wrong. It is a natural response to wanting stability and direction.

Yet there are moments when control reaches its limit. When no amount of effort creates clarity. When holding on becomes heavier than letting go.

Surrender begins in these moments.

Not as a dramatic act, but as a quiet recognition that forcing the situation further will not lead to resolution. It is the willingness to stop pushing against what is, and to allow life to be as it currently is.

This does not mean becoming passive or indifferent. It does not mean that nothing matters.

It means that the inner resistance to what is happening begins to soften.

There is a difference between action and resistance. Action can still arise within surrender. Decisions can still be made. Movement can still happen. But it is no longer driven by tension or the need to control every outcome.

Instead, there is a sense of allowing.

Allowing uncertainty to exist without immediately trying to eliminate it. Allowing emotions to move without suppressing or amplifying them. Allowing life to unfold without constant interference.

Surrender is not about trusting that everything will go as planned. It is about releasing the need for life to follow a specific plan in order to feel at ease.

There is a quiet strength in this. A strength that does not come from holding everything together, but from no longer needing to.

Over time, surrender changes the way experience is held. What once felt like pressure begins to feel more open. What once felt like something to fight against becomes something that can be moved through.

It is not always comfortable. There can be uncertainty, even vulnerability. But there is also a sense of relief that emerges when resistance falls away.

Surrender does not provide immediate answers. It creates space for something deeper than answers to appear.

And in that space, something settles.

Not because everything is resolved, but because the need to force resolution is no longer there.

Afterword

There is nothing final about presence.

What has been written in these pages is not meant to be completed, understood, or held as something finished. It is only a reflection of moments in which something was briefly noticed – something quiet, subtle, and already present beneath the surface of everyday life.

These essays were never intended to form a conclusion. They move in circles more than in lines. Each one returns, in its own way, to the same simple space: the awareness of being here.

Over time, what once appeared as separate thoughts revealed itself as repetition of the same direction inward. Not toward answers, but toward a softer way of seeing.

If there is anything these pages point to, it is not a concept or a belief. It is a way of being with

experience without immediately turning it into something to solve.

And even this pointing is not necessary.

What remains is already here.

About the Author

I am a writer drawn to the quiet spaces between thoughts, where meaning is not declared but slowly revealed. My work does not begin with answers, but with observation – of inner movement, of silence, of the subtle ways presence can be felt in everyday life.

I did not set out to write a book. These essays began as individual reflections, written over time and originally shared as a website series. Only later

did I recognize that they were connected, not through intention, but through a shared direction inward.

My writing is shaped by a simple interest: what it means to be fully present. Not as a concept, but as an experience. In listening, in holding space, in vulnerability, in trust, in letting go, and in surrender. These are not ideas I try to define, but states I try to stay close to through language.

I do not see writing as a way to explain life, but as a way to stay near to it without reducing it. What matters to me is not clarity in the intellectual sense, but honesty in perception – the willingness to notice what is already here.

This book is a collection of such moments. Nothing more, and nothing less.

📘 Back Cover Text

Presence is a collection of essays exploring silence, trust, vulnerability, and the quiet space of being.

Originally written as individual reflections for a website series, these texts gradually revealed a shared thread. Each essay stands on its own, yet together they form a continuous movement inward – toward stillness, toward letting go, toward simply being.

This is not a guide or a system. It does not offer answers or instructions. Instead, it invites a slower way of reading, where meaning is not explained but felt.

In a world that often moves quickly toward solutions, these pages open a different space: one where nothing needs to be fixed in order to be true.

Presence is not something to achieve. It is something already here, waiting to be noticed.